

following parallels as he sized up Gomulka and the Polish crisis; as Moscow-inspired Comintern policies had led to failure and near disaster for the CCP in China, so too in Poland was there a general backdrop of direction and practices which were not only inimical to Poland but had failed to gain popular support for the PUWP due to its failure to take into account national peculiarities (in historical terms relevant to Poland this analogy would include Soviet actions during World War II and the decimation of the entire Polish Communist Party in the purges of the 1930's); as Mao had recognized the need for and the applicability of paying heed to the special requirements of national conditions and environmental factors, so too had Gomulka pressed for and stuck to the proposition that Poland must follow its own "road to socialism;" consequently, as Mao had faced both personal humiliation and attack within the party and had faced the imposition of Soviet-trained and controlled party leadership, so too had Gomulka experienced similar, if not identical, obstacles; and Gomulka, as Mao, likewise struggled back into the seat of leadership on the basis of his own beliefs and on the strength of indigenous support, both within and without the party.

And, perhaps what was the pivotal fact here, Mao and Gomulka also shared a common commitment to the tradition of Marxism-Leninism (as "subjective" as this might have been) and the willingness to, if not the firm belief in, operating within its framework, and hence to maintain the image and structure of socialist unity. Nor was there ever any question in either of their minds, concerning the role of the party in a dictatorship of the proletariat (though for Mao this took a somewhat different form in the character of the People's Democratic Dictatorship).

This last point serves as a useful point of departure for a look at the Chinese condemnation of Imre Nagy as a heretic. While Nagy probably shares most of the common characteristics

noted above, his actions belie the necessity of adhering to "socialist discipline," or of bowing to the priorities of

maintaining socialist unity. And even, for that matter, of even ensuring the maintenance of power solely in the hands of the Communist party.

If one looks back into the formative years of the CCP and Mao's posture therein, it is also possible to discern proof of the emphasis which Mao and his colleagues place on these vital issues. It points up the fact that even in the turbulence and uncertainty of the 1920-30's there was a point beyond which Mao would not step, a point where the interests of "socialist unity" assumed top priority.

It has already been pointed out that in the face of demands for obedience to the Comintern, the theoretically-minded founders of the CCP toed the Moscow line as early as 1922 in order to avert a split with the socialist motherland. It has also been mentioned that Mao, throughout his rise to power and his employment of policies and practices which in reality ran counter to and denied the primacy of Moscow, not to speak of Marxist doctrine, did not openly break with but outwardly gave deference to the Comintern line. But, probably, the Sian Incident in 1936 most poignantly illustrates the importance placed by Mao on the need for ultimate unity in the ranks, without as well as within.

This episode, which occurred in late December of that year must itself be viewed in the context of Mao's resistance to the united front "line above" tactics laid down at the Seventh Comintern Congress in 1935. While steps had been taken towards the middle of 1936, and after, toward a rapprochement between the CCP and the KMT for an "anti-Japanese united front," the dramatic Sian coup served as a climax and a catharsis for these maneuvers. Sian brought into the open the impatience of the Comintern with Mao's reticence in carrying out the strategy evoked by the Seventh Congress.

As is indicated by Mao's own writings in late 1935 and early 1936, he resolutely opposed any alliance with Chiang Kai-shek and the KMT leadership. In fact, Mao's priorities seemed to clearly place the destruction of the Nanking regime

above the halting of the Japanese aggression.⁴¹ Indeed, even after the Comintern meeting during the summer of 1935, CCP hostility to the KMT leaders remained sufficiently strong to require direct Comintern intervention before they were willing to compromise with the erstwhile "national traitors."⁴² (And, indeed, it was Wang Ming himself, since disposed leader of the CCP and whom Mao had replaced, and now the CCP delegate to the Comintern, who pushed the new united front line from Moscow.)

In brief, during a visit to Sian to investigate the military situation there, Chiang was captured by his own troops in a protest against delays in earnestly meeting the Japanese encroachments. Hoping to establish some kind of synthesis from such a meeting, the rebels notified the CCP leaders who immediately rushed to the scene. With Chou En-lai as the chief Communist representative on the spot, it is clear that the inclination to do away with Chiang was great. During the ensuing days, the fate of the Nationalist commander was precarious, and there is even evidence of plans for a "mass trial of Chiang as a traitor."⁴³ Moscow, however, took a quite different view of the whole matter.

In line with its united front "from above" strategy composed in the face of increasing fascist dangers on two fronts, Moscow directly intervened in what must have been a great temptation on the part of the CCP to eliminate their arch-enemy. To Moscow, this was a "plot against the process of China's unification," which "could only benefit Japanese imperialism."⁴⁴ From accumulated evidence, there appears to be a strong case supporting the fact that a telegram direct from Stalin to Mao at this crucial juncture stated that unless Chiang was released the Chinese Communists would be condemned as bandits and repudiated.⁴⁵

There is here the outline of a case of the direct imposition of Moscow views, in an effort to gain and secure a Comintern policy opposed by indigenous party leaders. On December 24, Chiang was released and given his freedom. It

is clear that Mao bowed to Moscow and to "socialist discipline." While Mao's acquiescence proved to be only temporary in nature, the immediate alternatives and decisions of the Sian affair might still be relevant in casting light on Mao's later relations to a situation in Hungary which bore many of the same principles.

Perhaps the basic concept to bear in mind in this historical exercise is the fact that Moscow emerges as the common factor, or irritant. The common denominator throughout is the role of the Soviet Union as an agent intensifying the struggle for leadership and control in national Communist parties. It, furthermore, may serve to suggest once again that the CCP does possess a consciousness of national diversity which is absent from the Soviet perspective, or at least appeared to be absent in its relations with Eastern Europe after World War II and its ascendancy to dominance in the area. But it must be remembered as well, that Mao has shown these opposite aspects as well as his rebel strains.

What is suggested here, in essence, is the introduction of a personal factor, the human element which cannot be excluded from any assessment of political behavior, and which sometimes plays a part far out of proportion to its place in a power-ideology perspective.

IV

In June of 1949, three months before the Communist regime was officially declared in Peiping, Mao Tse-tung set forth his well-known "lean to one side policy," leaving little doubt as to China's posture as a full-fledged (even if not fully "recognized") participant in the international arena. In part he said:

"(We are told) 'You are leaning to one side.' Exactly...In order to attain victory and consolidate it, we must lean to one side...The Chinese people must lean either to the side of imperialism or to that of Socialism. There can be no exception. There can be no sitting on the fence; there is no third path...Internationally we belong to the side of the anti-imperialist front headed by the Soviet Union." 46

Though the importance for the Chinese Communists of such an alliance may have waned since its earlier years, its status and role in that "front" has steadily and increasingly grown in significance, not only for the Chinese themselves but for the Communist world. Since the unsure years of the early fifties, the CCP has gained in name, if not in reality, a stature as co-leader of the Communist bloc. This, in addition to ideological commitment and certain practical needs, has given the present regime a certain vested interest in the maintenance and continuation of "socialist unity;" both as a viable center of power and support, and as a viable center of power for the forward progress of the movement itself. Therefore, the CCP leadership was, and is, deeply involved in and concerned with any disturbing or weakening signs within that camp as a whole. It only follows that it was deeply interested in the East European crisis in 1956.

That the Chinese are to some degree dependent on the existence of a strong and stable socialist camp, whether this be under the strict ideological and power ties of Stalinism

or under a looser form of "Socialist Commonwealth of States," for the achievement of certain aims and the satisfaction of certain needs, has been frequently pointed out. The range of factors usually covered include diplomatic, economic, military, strategic and ideological considerations, and have been examined both in terms of divisive and unifying effects. They need not be belabored here. ⁴⁷

In placing the East European events in a ~~sharper~~ Chinese focus, however, ~~it may~~ be useful to briefly consider a few additional points.

It should be remembered that East European developments held equal meaning for the CCP hierarchy internally, particularly during the time which they took place. The country was in the midst of the "Hundred Flowers" movement, a fact which must have proved most unsettling to the party leadership in light of the extent and nature of the criticism leveled at the regime. This is underscored by the fact that the regime did not feel willing, or able, to stem the tide of the movement for a full year after it had begun. And when it did, it felt the need to accomplish this with a full-scale "rectification" campaign, or Cheng Feng Movement.

The year 1956 also was a year of the "big push forward" in the economy of China. There was at this time a highly accelerated nationalization of the economy, involving both the collectivization of agriculture and the state takeover of the remaining remnants of private industry. The resultant surge in organization and investment meant the placing of additional burdens on the economy and on the people. This could hardly be expected not to cause a certain amount of tension and strain on the Chinese domestic scene. Perhaps, in light of the economic aspects of the outcries in Eastern Europe, the fact that 1957 was a year of retrenchment by the Chinese Communists was dictated by more than economic evaluations alone.

In addition to popular, particularly intellectual and student unrest, and economic stress during this crucial period

there were also, to an indeterminate degree, certain military and political diversions internally. This general period marks the culmination of a two-year Chinese Communist effort to deepen its influence and broaden its control in Tibet, occupied by the Chinese military since 1950. Reports from China at this time not only indicate a general failure in this effort but the necessity for using heavy armaments to keep the situation under control.

There has been some suggestion as well of political troubles within the CCP hierarchy itself, an ostensibly rare phenomenon indeed. The basis for such speculation focuses on the 1955 purge from high party ranks of veteran leaders Kao Kang and Jao Shu-shih.⁴⁸ Conclusions drawn from what information is available, point to the likelihood of a power struggle within the party which has existed since 1953 and which centers about the successor to Mao Tse-tung.⁴⁹ It is impossible to assess a weight of importance to this factor, except to mention it as a part of the "objective" situation. It is interesting to note, with regard to this, that some observers have apparently viewed the Kao-Jao "plot" as an attempt on the part of a pro-Soviet clique within the CCP to undermine either the present leadership, or the likely successors to the present leadership. The conflict has been cast in terms of trying to discredit an alleged indigenous policy not in harmony with the desires of Moscow.⁵⁰

There is, finally, at least one other approach from which to look at the Chinese Communist cosmos of 1956. This is in the perspective of China's position in, and relation to, the rest of Asia (and indeed, an emerging Africa). China today wears many different "hats" in its external relations. At least three of these have an Asian tint to them.

China must consider its posture in relation to its own, however small, "satellite" appendages in the Democratic Republic of (North) Vietnam and the Democratic Republic of (North) Korea; its relations with other Communist parties in Asia (and Overseas Chinese as potential sources of independent

strength and as allies of Communist movements in those countries); and its position vis-a-vis the non-Communist, and largely uncommitted, nation-states of Asia. Finally, whether admitted or not, is the fact that in many Asian and African eyes, Communist China is today competing with non-Communist India as representatives of two alternatives of models for economic development and of entrance into the modern age (and by implication, a new world order).

In all of these instances, China's posture is of great importance. The image which it projects beyond its borders is, in general, not one only as a nation-state facing and attempting to solve problems facing two-thirds of the world today, but also as a part, and an influential member, of the Communist bloc of nations. In a sense, China is Communism's showcase for all underdeveloped countries. If we assume that China desires to expand its influence, which seems a minimal assumption in view of the fact that this does not necessarily connote military expansion, and believes in the inevitable march of history towards world Communism, the greater appears its need for maintaining a definite kind of profile.

In this light, it might be useful to ~~take~~ ^{take} a second look at Chou En-lai's message to ~~the~~ Asian countries he visited in November and December, 1956. The emphasis placed on the "error" of "big-nation chauvinism" and the firm backing of the "five principles" as a basis for international relations, seems to infer that the Chinese had more concern for their position vis-a-vis areas outside their direct control or influence than those within this area. In essence, what worried Peiping most was not the reflection its response to the East European crisis would cast over its so-called "satellites," or the border areas where it already exercises hegemony, but with the effect it would have upon non-Communist Asia.

China, in line with the "special" position the Communist camp generally acknowledges it to have in Asia, sought to maintain, and possibly to strengthen, that role. The CCP apparently recognized the need to present to sensitive Asian leaders, whose countries and people for the most part are presently

emerging from the limitations, frustrations and humiliation of foreign control, or domination, a picture of moderation and good-will. And it is possible, from a review of some Polish statements made at this time, that in exchange for Chinese support in its ~~struggle~~ with the Soviet Union, the Poles in turn made some remarks clearly earmarked for Asian consumption.

In an article from Warsaw in late December, the NY Times reports Polish sources as crediting the Chinese Communists with a moderating influence on international Communism specifically, and the international scene generally. Moreover, the Poles continued, Chinese Communist theory and practice contain a form a humanism absent from Soviet practice. What's more, in the Polish view, this called for a reassessment of China in world affairs.⁴⁸ This, of course, has to be viewed as well in light of the Polish anticipation of Chou's visit to Moscow and Warsaw, but this doesn't detract from any impact it may have had in Asia.

At the same time, in its support and interpretation of Soviet intervention in Hungary, China may have sacrificed certain short-term advantages in its Asian position for what it may have considered more strategic long-range benefits. It is undoubtedly held to by the CCP leadership that its long-run influence, and prestige (as well as its claims to legitimacy as a member of the "family of nations"), in the emerging areas of the globe, will be enhanced to the degree that that part of humanity is presented with the imposing image of a constantly expanding, unified and progressive "socialist camp," relentlessly, indeed inevitably, winning the world. Placing the responsibility for violence and upheaval in Hungary on the shoulders of imperialism (a task made easier, unfortunately due to the Western engagement in Suez), fitted CCP needs as well as its ideological bent. Not only could the Soviet action be rationalized, but another blow could be struck

at the forces of imperialism, a phenomenon not far from the

minds and experience of most Asians. Moreover, by virtue of the synonymous way in which the CCP use the words imperialism and the United States, the Chinese could find another channel for discrediting the main physical ~~obstacle~~ to its ambitions and freedom of movement in Asia and the Formosa Strait.

As an added thought, applied internally, the CCP interpretation of the Hungarian affair might possibly been served up by the regime in an attempt to help allay internal strains. The CCP propaganda machines doubtlessly unrolled reams of material pointing to the fresh "dangers of aggression" emanating from a hostile imperialist bloc. And thus, could exercise a much needed instrument for seeking increased conformity and unity within China, as well as within the Communist camp as a whole, in face of the "external threat." A useful tool, indeed, to channel ~~from (somebody's) dissenting~~ ~~statements~~ ~~emergent~~ which seemingly was converging on Communism from all sides in the final weeks of 1956.

V.

CONCLUSION

The Chinese Communists were deeply involved in the internal crisis which shook the Communist world in the fall of 1956. As a result of ideological commitment, practical needs and long-range goals, the CCP leadership has assumed an increasingly important role in the international Communist movement; a role which has given it a certain vested interest in the maintenance of "socialist unity," both as a viable center for its own support, and as a viable center of power for the forward progress of the movement itself, and as protection against the dangers of "imperialist aggression."

There have been many interesting analyses offered for explaining China's role in and response to the Polish and Hungarian events of 1956. To be sure, China is more conscious of national diversity within the Communist camp than is the Soviet Union. It has been attempted to show, to some degree at least, why this is so.

Another important point to be remembered when considering this factor, however, is that China's own claim to "uniqueness" and its special position within the Communist world was certainly established and recognized before 1956. The CCP leadership never really had to exert too much worry ~~over~~ ~~about~~ this. Therefore, while this may have hovered in the background, China was not pressured into conformance with any Soviet line, in theory or practice. Rather, it appears that Chinese responses were a reflection of a combination of personally held beliefs and assessments as viewed from Peiping.

The CCP leadership, therefore, simply did what tactically appeared to make good sense. The pressure for ideological "purity," where and when such are manifested, on the part of China, has come from within the leadership of the regime itself, though for reasons which exist in addition to ideology.

While accounting here for the significance of interpretations implying new and earnest ideological efforts by the Chinese leadership, additional hypotheses have been offered for consideration as well.

It is suggested here that there has been a certain amount of pragmatism and a certain amount of ambivalence to the Chinese reactions during the East European crisis. But, that this must be viewed within a framework of fundamental beliefs and precepts accepted by them. These basic commitments have established a definite limitation to the extent of Chinese support to any effort on the part of national communist leaders holding state power to increase their own autonomy and go their own way on the international scene.

It appears, that in isolation from later events, the historical experience of the present core of Chinese leaders, and the contemporary circumstances in which they were acting, both national and international, disposed them toward a sympathetic view of the position taken by the satellite countries involved most directly in the 1956 disruptions, if not toward a position of actual support. This, in turn, as the severity of the Hungarian revolt became more apparent, to what on the surface emerged as a "dual" policy of continued support for Gomulka in Poland and condemnation of the Nagy government in Hungary. But, the latter in fact, implied a general framework within which Gomulka would have to remain if he were to receive continued support.

This policy, in turn, appears to have moved in a more restrictive direction with the inclusion of certain criteria proclaimed as universally applicable in all socialist countries, internationally, and within China itself, domestically. The former demarcation lines were marked by the recognition of proletarian internationalism as the highest of current priorities and the absolute requirement of the party's leading and dominant role in any socialist country. The latter guideposts were erected by Mao in the June version of his speech on contradictions, whereby^a six-fold formula was laid down for the utterance of criticism and the carrying on of discussion

within.

Thus the groundwork was laid for a swing of policy in quite the other direction. By the end of 1957, upon more detached ~~and~~ ^{reflect}ion and studied calculation and pushed by events within as well as without China itself, the swing of the policy pendulum moved toward a tightening up of the Communist camp and the relationships therein.

In addition, the Chinese response was governed to a degree by an Asian perspective which sought to keep in focus the consequences of Chinese actions ^{on} in Asia, and particularly in/on uncommitted Asia. And, possible internal uncertainty and uneasiness played their part as well.

But, underlying all of ~~this~~ ^{this} were a set of historical experiences which found vivid parallels in the Polish and, to a lesser extent, Hungarian events; and, that these served to condition, at least, the initial orientation of the views of Mao and the present core of CCP leadership. What is suggested here, then, is the introduction of a personal factor, the human elements, which cannot be excluded from any assessment of political behavior, relationships and actions, in that context.

CONCLUSION

The Chinese Communists were deeply involved in the internal crisis which shook the Communist world in the fall of 1956. As a result of ideological commitment, practical needs and long-range goals, the CCP leadership has assumed an increasingly important role in the international Communist movement; a role which has given it a certain vested interest in the maintenance of "socialist unity," both as a viable center ~~for its own~~ support, and as a viable center of power for the forward progress of the movement itself.

There have been many interesting analyses offered for explaining China's role in and response to the Polish and Hungarian events of 1956. While accounting here for the significance of interpretations implying new and earnest ideological efforts by the Chinese leadership, additional hypotheses have been offered for consideration.

It is suggested here, ^{THAT} there has been a certain amount of pragmatism and a certain amount of ambivalence to the Chinese reactions during this crisis, ~~(But that~~ ^{this must} ~~be viewed~~ ^{be viewed} within a framework of fundamental beliefs and precepts accepted by them. These basic commitments, as it were, have established a definite limitation to the extent of Chinese support to any effort on the part of national communist leaders holding state power to increase their own autonomy and go their own way on the international scene.)

It appears, that in isolation from later events/developments, the historical experience of the present core of the Chinese leadership, ^{and} the contemporary circumstances in which they were acting, ~~both national and inter~~ ^{both national and inter} national, disposed them toward a sympathetic view of the position taken by the satellite countries involved most directly in the 1956 events, if not toward a position of strong support.. This in turn, as the severity of the Hungarian revolt became more apparent, to

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therein.

In summation, the following is suggested: There was a
certain pragmatism and a certain ambivalence to the Chinese
response, but ~~that~~ they are set within the framework of
certain fundamental beliefs and ~~commitments~~, as well as
more practical calculations. ~~That,~~ In addition, the Chinese
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relationships and actions in that context.

TO BE WORKED INTO CONCLUSION:

To be sure, China is more conscious of national diversity within the Communist camp than is the Soviet Union. It has been attempted to show, in some degree at least, why this is so. What should also be remembered when considering this factor, however, is that China's own claim to "uniqueness" and its special position within the Communist world was certainly ~~xxx~~ established and recognized before 1956. The CCP leadership never really had to exert too much worry over this. Therefore, while this may have hovered in the background as a future possibility, China was not pressured into conformance with any Soviet line, ~~in action or in theory/in theory or practice~~ ideologically and in action. Rather, Chinese responses were a reflection of a combination of personally held beliefs and assessments as viewed from Peiping. ² The CCP leadership simply did ~~what~~ tactically appeared to make good sense. The pressure for ideological conformance on the part of China has come from within the leadership of the regime itself, though for reasons which exist in addition to ideology. x